

Frontier Men

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Ogden, Utah; '1934';
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Title Massacre of Indians
By white Troops Described
Old ~~set~~ Settler Recalls
Hanging of Thiere
by Vigilantes

By Dr Radin(?)

Date ~~o~~

Place ~~o~~

2151 Jefferson Ave

Informant: Mr. ^{William} Smith. b.
Orton, Cheshire, England 10/28/1850

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Mr. Barker
MASSACRE OF INDIANS BY WHITE TROOPS DESCRIBED

*see page 2
5 and 6*

1934
Old Settler Recalls Hanging of Thieves by Vigilantes

A pioneer who crossed the plains in 1862 and who freighted to Montana during the rough and ready days of the Vigilantes is the record of William G. Smith, 85 years old, who tells of his experiences.

Mr. Smith lived for many years in Ogden valley, Utah. He now resides at 2151 Jefferson avenue. He tells his life story as follows:

*Maurice Howe
Ogden, Utah*
"I was born in Oxton, Cheshire, England, October 28, 1850. My father was John A. Smith and my mother was Mary Eastman Smith. We left England on a sailing vessel May 5, 1862, and were five weeks on the voyage across the Atlantic to New York. There we took a train to St. Joseph, Missouri, and then went by steamer up the river to Winter Quarters, near Omaha.

"The Civil war was on then and I remember that in places the railroad tracks were torn up.

"When we went up the river by steamboat two members of the crew tried to run away when the boat stopped to load wood. The captain took a six-shooter in each hand and went after them and made them march back up the gang plank and stay with the boat.

Ate Buffalo Meat

"Captain Miller of Farmington met the company of L.D.S. converts with fifty wagons and teams. We waited three weeks to let the weary oxen rest up for the return journey and then we started over the prairies in July. We experienced no trouble on the plains with Indians. The men who night herded the cattle used to hunt in the daytime and often they would kill buffalo and deer for the camp.

"When we camped by streams we used to catch suckers and trout to eat. Edward Rushton was our teamster. Besides my parents those in our family were my brother, Isaac, Thomas, Joseph and John, and my sisters, Julia, Mary Ann, Elizabeth Jane and Mathilda Ann. We slept in a tent at night on the plains.

"When we got to South Pass, where the elevation is about 8,000 feet above sea level in the mountains of Wyoming the nights were very cold and snow fell, as it was getting late in the autumn. We arrived in Salt Lake City, October 10, 1862.

Saw Soldiers Arrive

"While we were living there General Connor of the United States army came marching with a party of 500 soldiers past our home. They had traveled all the way from California. The soldiers crossed the Jordan river on a bridge west of town and went up where Fort Douglas is now and located and pitched their tents. As it was too late to build barracks they had to live in tents all winter.

"As the soldiers passed our house the band began to play and a neighbor named Barker told me the reason the band played was because it was my birthday. I was just 12 years old.

"That winter my father earned a living hauling wood for the army. The general contracted with John Sharp for five hundred cords of wood to be delivered at the fort at eleven dollars per cord.

"A widow named Mrs. Blashby owned the house we lived in. She had an ox team and wagon so she let father haul wood and pay her a share of the profit. Father went to the mountains and hauled a cord and a half every three days and thus earned quite a little cash.

Terrible Massacre

"We went up into Cache valley in 1863 and I remember the great tragedy of the Indians on Bear river there.

"As I recall, the trouble started when the whites moved in and began taking the Indians' lands, killing off the game and gradually pushing the Indians back from the ground they had held for centuries. As the Indians began losing their food supply and the game was disappearing they began demanding food from the settlers. Brigham Young often advised the people that it was better to feed than to fight the Indians and he advised treating them kindly. But trouble grew near the Utah border.

"By that time the telegraph had come in and a message was sent to Salt Lake City and Fort Douglas was notified. The Indians came to the bishop at Franklin and demanded that Ben Chadwick be turned over to them for killing one of their number. When that was refused they became threatening.

Connor Attacks

"General Connor and his soldiers then came up in the dead of winter and attacked the Indians. The general divided his forces and surrounded the Indian camp at a place since called Battle Creek along the Bear river. The weather was bitterly cold, way below zero, and snow was on the ground and the river partly covered with ice.

"Instead of offering the Indians a chance to surrender and take them peacefully, General Connor issued a very cruel order to his men. He said, "Take no prisoners, fight to the death; nits breed lice'.

"When the first charge was made, the bugler who sounded the call fell, pierced with 13 bullets.

"The Indian warriors fought as best they could but they were outnumbered, taken almost unawares and hopelessly handicapped with their wives and children.

Butchered Little Babies

"The soldiers killed without mercy, children and women were slaughtered and blood flowed like water. The white soldiers were worse than savages in their butchery. I talked with one soldier who boasted how he had seized poor little innocent Indian papooses by the feet and cut them to pieces with a saber.

"There was little chance for any to escape and the poor Indians died fighting for their homes where they had lived for hundreds of years. I often think how we prize patriotism when our men fight for their native land and how we prize loyalty when it is on our side, but how we condemn it when we see loyalty in an Indian who fought for his native land.

"A few days after when the soldiers went back to Salt Lake City I saw a little six-year-old Indian girl riding on a pony, a prisoner among strangers. I often wondered who she was and what became of her.

Escaped in Icy Water

"Another Indian that I know escaped the massacre was Bush Head. He had leaped into the ice-cold waters of Bear river and drifted downstream among the cakes of ice for a long ways and then crawled out naked and wet, and hid in some bushes. Somehow he survived that cold January weather.

I asked him years later how it was he didn't die and he answered, "Bush

Handwritten in red ink:
This was the first time I saw a Indian girl riding on a pony.

Head too tough, cold water no kill him.'

"That tragedy on Bear River was one of the most terrible acts ever committed by so-called civilized people. A lot of injustice was done to the Indian people. The Indians were firm friends when treated fairly.

"Later that year 1863 we moved to Huntsville. I knew old Captain Hunt who settled it.

Worked on U.P.

"I worked on the Union Pacific railroad when it was being built from Echo to Ogden in 1868 and 1869. When the grade had reached Peterson, Apostle Franklin D. Richards took a contract to move the wagon road from down in the river bottom to the side of the hill above the tracks. He hired me for \$5 a day and board for me and yoke of oxen. We cut the road on the hillside and he was paid so much a cubic yard for removing the earth, then we piled the earth on the grade for the railroad we were paid so much a yard for the fill and thus made money both ways.

"When the road progressed as far as Promontory station, Benson, Farr and West, a firm of contractors, had a hundred-mile contract on the Central Pacific building east. Just about a mile west of where the golden spike was driven they had to make a cut of about a mile. This was heavy work and they were afraid they could not finish on time, so they sent word to Ogden to secure as many men as possible. Jack Wilson, Henry Bronson and myself went out with yokes of oxen and helped them finish that cut. They paid us \$2.50 a day and board. We did most of the work with wheelbarrows as that was before the day of steamshovels.

"Then Calvin Wheeler took a contract to furnish 500 cords of cedar wood for the railroad and he gave us three a sub-contract for one hundred cords at two dollars per cord. A cord is eight feet long, four feet wide and four feet high, and we cut two cords a day each so we soon got that hundred cords cut.

Missed Golden Spike

"Then Wheeler hired me to help him drive 300 head of cattle from Promontory to Ogden. He used to get \$3 a head for taking care of cattle all winter for people who did not want to herd their own. I helped him bring the cattle in just before the last spike was driven, so I missed seeing the golden spike celebration.

"In 1870 I hauled freight to Pioche, Nevada, where the mines had opened up.

"One time when Charlie Nye and I were freighting to Pioche we had to go through Devil's Gate, a gap in the rocks on the west side of the Iron County desert near the Nevada line. Superstitious people said the Gideon robbers of the Book of Mormon days were reincarnated eight feet tall and stayed in those rocks. One evening as Charlie and I drove our teams through the narrow defile the horses stopped and put their ears forward. We were pretty well frightened but we could not turn around nor stay in that narrow place, so I went forward with my whip and six-shooter very cautiously and found the 'ghost' was a big white horse with a black tail, left behind by some campers the previous day.

"In 1871 I went to freighting to Montana. Great herds of buffalo blackened the Sun River prairies at that time and we often killed one for meat. I never killed in a regular way then.

for meat. I never believed in slaughtering more than we could use. We would pick out a young buffalo with a black color because they get browner as they get old. The meat was excellent. I always enjoyed the tender chops off the hump of a bison. We would roast them over the hot coals by putting sharp green sticks in the ground to hold the chunk of meat near the fire. Sometimes we fried the meat or cooked it in Dutch ovens in the ashes. I had two men with me and we drove two ten-mule teams. We often shot a deer and would cook the entire hind quarters for a meal. It used to take us 21 days to drive from Corinne, Utah to Helena, Montana.

Quick Shooting.

"We used to carry .45 calibre Colts revolvers that cost us \$35 each in Salt Lake City. We used to practice quick shooting. We never stopped to aim, but just shot by instinct, like pointing your finger. I could drive a tack head at three rods with a bullet from one of those six-shooters.

"I used to haul freight for a merchant named Kleinsmid. We got five cents a pound for heavy stuff, seven and a half cents for dry goods and ten cents for millinery, because that was light and took a lot of space in the wagons. We could put three thousand pounds in the trail and swing wagons and seventhouasand pounds on the lead wagons when we had three hooked up in a line.

"There were a lot of cutthroats and robbers in Helena in the early days. There was one class of criminals called bushwhackers. They had come from the bottom lands down south where they had been guerillas during the Civil war, robbers of the dead soldiers' bodies after a battle. They drifted to Montana and used slingshots loaded with rocks or lead to kill unwary miners or freighters who had a few dollars.

"A favorite trick was to hide in an alley or doorway until a victim came along and then hit him with the slingshot, which made no noise, drag him into the alley and rob him.

"Horse thieves, gamblers and highwaymen abounded, but the worst of all were the bushwhackers. One day in 1873 or 1874 when I came to Helena I got my pay from the merchant. He told me to walk up the middle of the streets and not get close to any buildings when we went around to see the town.

Hung Three One Night

"That evening I drove outside of town to Dry Gulch, just over the hill and made camp. We put our wagons in the form of a square and slept out on the ground. The next morning I got up and there--only fifty feet away--was a gruesome sight. The bodies of three of the Montana bad men were hanging to a tree limb. The Vigilantes had got busy during the night and had determined to rid the town of these dangerous characters, so they strung up three of the worst one. Each man had a placard on his back telling what his crime was. Within 24 hours not a bushwhacker was in Helena.

"About 1877 the Indians went on the war path because of the way the whites were treating them. Chief Joseph, leader of the Nez Perce, was one of the greatest men that ever lived. He was a fine, educated Indian and a great general. One time in the Lemhi valley of Idaho he was traveling with a large number of his tribe. He had an advance guard and a rear guard, he was with the main body of Indians.

"The advance guard came upon three teamsters named Jim Hayden, Dan Combe and Harry Green and a Chinese cook, who were camped at Birch Creek 30 miles ahead of my outfit and another teamster's outfit. We each had two ten-mule teams.

Killed Three Freighters

"General Howard was chasing the Nez Perce at that time. The advance guard of warriors killed all three teamsters. Captain Jim Hayden emptied his revolver at the Indians before they finally killed and scalped him.

"The Chinaman escaped by hiding in the brush. Before he got away the Indians had a lot of fun with him riding on his back and making him buck like a horse. There was a wagon load of whisky in the outfit and when the Indians found that they became very drunk.

"When Chief Joseph came up he was very angry at his young braves for what they had done and he made them set fire to the wagons and whisky. He did not believe in drinking liquor. The property belonged to a Colonel Shupe and he put in a claim to congress and they reimbursed him several thousand dollars for the damage done.

"These freighters were on their way from Corinne to Salmon City, Idaho and I was going to Helena. I was warned at the Sand Hills station about the outbreak because the Chinaman that escaped went to the stage line and gave the alarm.

Treated Indians Fair

"I never had any trouble with the Indians because they liked me. I treated them well and used to feed them when they came to my camp and were hungry. One time I was camped by the road in Idaho and a young Indian man and his wife came to our camp. She appeared very ill. I told them to come and eat and got them some coffee, sugar, bread and bacon. Pretty soon the young squaw got up and went off into the sage brush. We hitched up our teams and cleared camp and before we drove on the Indian woman came back to camp carrying a new-born baby. The Indian women are very hardy and bear their suffering without fussing.

"Another time some of my mules got away from the bell mare that they were trained to follow while turned loose at night. The mules got in among the herd of Indian ponies at the reservation at Ross Fork in Lincoln valley, north of Pocatello. I appealed to some Indians to get my stock for me and when they brought the mules I gave them each a red shirt which pleased them very much.

Avenged Wrong

"The Indians were moral and obeyed their own customs as we do ours. One time a teamster abused a young defenseless Indian squaw. A year later when that teamster was putting up his horses at a stage station a shot

rang out by the corral and the young husband had avenged the wrong. The whites resented any wrong doing by an Indian but they thought it was all right to injure the Indians any way they chose.

"In 1872 my brother Thomas and I had 18 head of mules stolen. The mules were worth \$200 each. We had them newly shod at Corinne ready to go north when they were taken.

"We set out horseback and trailed the robbers up through Malad valley and over to Bannock creek, the other side of Pocatello before we found the mules. En route we met the two men who had stolen them heading back, but of course we did not know it was they. We tried to get Sheriff Morgan of Malad to go with us but he was busy attending the trial of Pat Murphy, toll keeper in Portneuf canyon, who was accused of killing someone. We brought the mules back and a couple of stolen horses belonging to another teamster.

"After the railroad was built to Dillon, Montana, I went to Blackfoot Idaho and freighted to Custer City and Bonanza, Idaho. I hauled a quartz mill for General J.B. Haggia company. Then other freighters began to come in, so I sold my outfit of 14 mules, harness and wagons for \$3,000 to Charles Bunting.

"By that time the Nez Perce had drifted north almost to Canada, where they were trying to get across the border. Chief Joseph led his people, encumbered as he was with baggage, women and children, on one of the most masterful retreats in history. Finally General Miles met the Indians and ruthlessly killed about half of them and took the rest to the reservation at Pine Ridge, South Dakota, where a large number were later killed in the massacre there in 1891. By that time the army had machine guns and they slaughtered a great many unarmed Indians at the Pine Tree agency.

Removed to the Desert

"A lot of the Indians were taken to Oklahoma. This was a great injustice because the Indians that had lived among the mountains and forests could not stand the heat and low altitude of the Oklahoma deserts. Many of them died of disease and homesickness. It was a mistake to try and make them stay on a reservation in a country where they were unused to living. The mountain Indians belonged to the mountains.

"I got married August 7, 1876, in Salt Lake City. My wife is Diana Bingham. Her grandfather, Brastus Bingham, ~~her grandfather~~ was one of the first settlers of Ogden. She is 78 years old now. We have had eleven children. Ten are still living. They are: Mrs. Mary Skinner, Rupert Idaho; Mrs. Elizabeth Mortenson, Salt Lake City; Thomas Smith, Burley, Idaho; Bert LeRoy Smith, Rupert, Idaho; Grant Smith, Mrs. Blanche Lowenstein, Mrs. Isabel Richardson, Mrs. Pearl Hull, Mrs. Hirschel Walker, Mrs. Della Greenwell, all of Ogden. I have 40 grandchildren and 18 great grand children.

"In 1883 I returned to farming in Huntsville and continued until recent years. We used to get the mail twice a week in Ogden valley. I recall that David Moore used to be the mail carrier. He rode horseback from Ogden to Huntsville and we eagerly awaited his coming with news from the outside world.

"I served as justice of the peace for 20 years at Huntsville and one week I turned in \$1700 in fines or forfeitures to County Treasurer Alma Chambers.

In 1897 I was elected county commissioner and served during 1898 and 1899. Tuesday was my fifty-eighth wedding anniversary."

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VII Frontier Memories

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